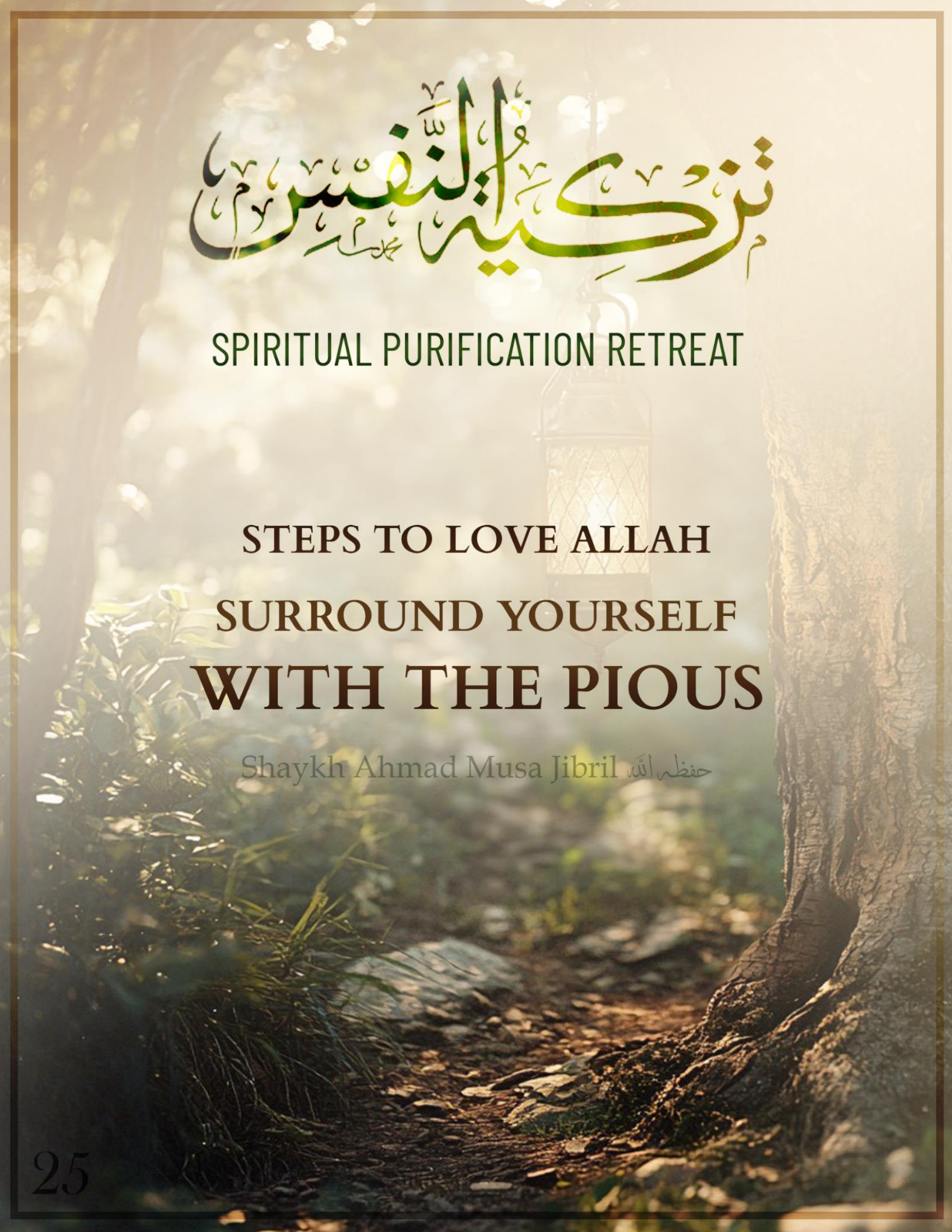

SPIRITUAL PURIFICATION RETREAT

STEPS TO LOVE ALLAH

SURROUND YOURSELF WITH THE PIOUS

Shaykh Ahmad Musa Jibril حفظه الله

Spiritual Purification Retreat | Ramadan 1446

Steps to Love Allāh

Surround Yourself with the Pious

Ash-Shaykh Al-Imām Ahmad Mūsā Jibrīl (حفظه الله)

In the last few talks, we've been discussing the practical steps that lead to loving Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. The first factor that we took was learning about Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and His Qualities and the Ni'am of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. Ibn Al-Qayyim رحمه الله تعالى separates those into two aspects: learning about Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and His Qualities and then learning about the Ni'am of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى as a separate aspect, but we combined them into one because we went over these aspects many times throughout our recent talks. The second aspect that leads to loving Allāh سبحانه وتعالى that we covered is having a bond with the word of Allāh, with the Qur'ān, the recitation of the Qur'ān. The third, which we will begin on right now Inshā'Allāh, is being around people who genuinely love Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, learning from their wise words, and selecting the most profound insights and valuable lessons from their talk. Ibn Al-Qayyim رحمه الله تعالى not only recommended surrounding oneself with such individuals who appear to have genuine love for Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, but he also emphasized the importance of being selective in the positive teachings that they have to offer. He advised to take the most valuable insights and teachings from their words. It's like entering an orchard filled with the finest fruits, but then you select only the very best fruits among all the good fruits that are in the orchard. If someone genuinely wants to love Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, their hearts need to connect to and love everything related to Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. One who loves Allāh سبحانه وتعالى will feel a strong bond with the Word of Allāh, with the Qur'ān, because it's guidance from Allāh and because it's the Word of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. They will cherish the Messenger ﷺ, by loving him and following him, because he brings them the guidance from Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and he's sent by Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and he's most beloved to Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. They will then also love those who obey Allāh سبحانه وتعالى's Commands and appear close to Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. You love them because their apparent actions reflect their closeness to Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, and that helps bring you closer to Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, and it helps keep you steadfast. You'll see individuals who engage in sinful behavior come together and encourage and support each other in their transgressions and share love for one another in that filthy cause. Athletes, for example, love each other, and they form bonds based on their

athletic abilities. Singers and actors cultivate relationships within their shared profession. And likewise, those who love Allāh سبحانه وتعالى form a bond with each other. That bond helps them attain the love of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and to remain steadfast on this difficult path. The gathering of individuals who love Allāh سبحانه وتعالى to study the Dīn of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and to remind each other of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى is an established ‘Ibādah, and it’s one of the most powerful ways to nurture love for Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. In Sahīh Muslim,

وَمَا اجْتَمَعَ قَوْمٌ فِي بَيْتٍ مِنْ بُيوتِ اللَّهِ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ، ويَتَدَارسُونَه بيْنَهُم

Those who gather in the House of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى*, reciting the Book of Allāh* سبحانه وتعالى *and learning and teaching the Qur’ān to each other,*

The reward is what?

إِلاَّ نَزَلَتْ علَيهِم السَّكِينَة، وغَشِيَتْهُمْ الرَّحْمَة، وَحَفَّتْهُم الملائِكَةُ، وذَكَرهُمْ اللَّه فِيمنْ عِنده

Tranquility will descend upon them, mercy will cover them, the angels will surround them, and Allāh سبحانه وتعالى *will mention them in the presence of those near Him.*

What do those who love Allāh سبحانه وتعالى discuss in their gatherings? Their discussions roam around bringing themselves and those around them closer to Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. Being in the company of virtuous individuals serves as a reminder of the Ākhirah, it encourages you to practice Zuhd and to detach your heart from this Dunyā. If you make a mistake, those righteous, virtuous brothers will correct you. If you forget or you lose focus, they’re there to remind you. If you’re neglectful and not thinking about Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, they’ll remind you to focus on Him. If you exhibit arrogance, they’ll show you the importance of being

humble. If you have show-off, they'll guide you towards sincerity, they'll offer you advice and help you clear and purify your intentions. If there are doubts, they'll help dispel the doubts, they'll help transform those doubts into certainty. They'll motivate you into seeking righteousness and steering clear away from sins and misguidance. Spending time with those who appear to love Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and loving them for the sake of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى is a manifestation of sincere faith. It serves as a protective barrier for your Īmān; it protects your heart, it strengthens your faith, and it helps prevent any relapse in your Dīn. If the only benefit of loving your brothers and being around them for the sake of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى is being shaded under the Throne of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى on a day when no other shade exists, that would be more than enough blessing for that 'Ibādah. Allāh سبحانه وتعالى says in the Hadīth Al-Qudsi,

إن الله تعالى يقول يوم القيامة أين المتحابون بجلالي؟ اليوم أظلهم في ظلي يوم لا ظل إلا ظلي

Where are those who have mutual love for the sake of My Glory? Today, I shall shelter them in My Shade when there will be no shade except Mine.

In another Hadīth Qudsi, in Muwattā' Mālik and Musnad Ahmad, Allāh سبحانه وتعالى says

وجبت محبتي للمتحابين فيَّ، والمتجالسين فيَّ ، والمتزاورين فيَّ ، والمتباذلين فيَّ

My Love is due to those who love one another for My sake, and My Love is due for those who visit one another for My sake, and My Love is due for those who meet each other for My sake, and My Love is due for those who spend in charity for My sake.

Companionship has a significant impact on an individual. In Sunan Abu Dāwūd, the Messenger ﷺ said,

الرَّجُلُ عَلَى دِينِ خَلِيلِهِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ أَحَدُكُمْ مَنْ يُخَالِلُ

A man follows the religion of his friend, so each one of you should consider whom he chooses as a friend.

When one associates with individuals who are dedicated to cultivating a love for Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, he's most likely going to develop a similar affection for Allāh سبحانه وتعالى himself. A memory comes to mind of a brother who, some time ago, while I was under severe restriction, he journeyed halfway across the world to come see me. Upon arriving in the United States, he found himself approximately ten hours or so away, and he was determined to meet me for the sake of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, undertaking the considerable distance in the United States by car. We spend a few moments together. We engaged in a conversation about Ahādīth, and we didn't go beyond some Ahādīth, and I mentioned a Hadīth. I expressed to him, first of all, my Du'ā that Allāh سبحانه وتعالى would bestow His Love upon him. Then I mentioned a Hadīth to him narrated by Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه that the Messenger ﷺ said, *"A man visited a brother of his in a village, so Allāh* سبحانه وتعالى *sent an angel to wait for him on the road. The angel asked, 'Where are you going?' The man responded, he said, 'I'm going to visit a brother of mine in this village.' The angel said, 'Does he have a favor over you? Do you owe him something? Is that why you're visiting him?' He said, 'No, I just love him for the sake of Allāh* سبحانه وتعالى*.' The angel said,*

فإني رسول الله إليك بأن الله قد أحبك كما أحببته فيه

'I am a Messenger of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى *to inform you that Allāh* سبحانه وتعالى *loves you as you love him for His sake.'"*

It's possible for a believer to enter Jahannam, والعياذ بالله, due to shortcomings, yet Allāh سبحانه وتعالى may accept the Shafā'ah of righteous friends he had in this Dunyā, and with their Shafā'ah that Allāh سبحانه وتعالى accepts, he will be saved from Jahannam. In Sunan Ibn Mājah, the Messenger ﷺ said when Allāh سبحانه وتعالى saves the believers from Jahannam, those believers who were saved will ask about other brothers in faith that they missed — they don't see them, they entered Jahannam. They'll seek Shafā'ah for them. They'll say, *"Yā Allāh! They're our brothers. We used to perform Salāh together, we fasted together, we performed Hajj together, and now they're admitted into Jahannam."* And Allāh سبحانه وتعالى will say, *"Go bring forth those whom you recognize among them",* and they will.

Having brothers who you love for the sake of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى is a grace and blessing. Allāh سبحانه وتعالى called it a Ni'mah.

وَٱذْكُرُواْ نِعْمَتَ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنتُمْ أَعْدَآءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُم بِنِعْمَتِهِۦٓ إِخْوَٰنًا

And remember the favor of Allāh upon you - when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together and you became, by His favor, brothers.

بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا. 'Umar رضي الله عنه stated that there were three matters, if not for them, he would have no desire to continue living, and one of those matters is being surrounded with righteous brothers. If establishing brotherhood and sisterhood with the righteous who love Allāh سبحانه وتعالى is commendable to this extent, then consider the value of being in the company of Ulamā' who apply their knowledge and put it into practice. Personally observing a role model has a more profound impact on the self than merely hearing or reading about them. It leaves a lasting impression of goodness on the observer. Those who take knowledge from righteous Ulamā' act and think differently than those who took it from PDFs. The Sahābah رضي الله عنهم were very fortunate in this regard. They had

the opportunity to sit with the Messenger ﷺ, and they had the opportunity to witness his actions. They were in close proximity to him. What was the result? They held a profound love for Allāh سبحانه وتعالى that transcended verbal expression. They became the finest nation ever established for the benefit of humanity, following the example set for them by RasūlAllāh ﷺ. The deficiency in spirituality, the absence of love for Allāh سبحانه وتعالى in the hearts of many, and the lack of proper manners and knowledge that's widespread these days can be attributed, to a certain degree, to the superficial acquisition of knowledge through digital means and written materials. The situation gets worse by individuals who present themselves as students of knowledge or followers of the pure Manhaj while exploiting that status for their own filthy, personal benefits. They lack connection or respect to the Ulamā', even the Ulamā' of the Haqq. The companionship of righteous Ulamā', students of 'Ilm, and sincere brothers acts as a constant reminder of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. You experience a profound sense of love, comfort, tranquility, and serenity in their presence because their gatherings are centered around Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. You see their love for Allāh سبحانه وتعالى in their demeanor, in their appearance, in their humility, in their speech, in their attentiveness, in their movements, and even in their silence — in all aspects of their lives. Their presence reminds you of the love of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. The inspiration derived from such individuals when they're nearby fosters love for Allāh سبحانه وتعالى within oneself. If the heart is filled with the brightness of loving Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, it shines on the faces. That's why they're blessed with radiant faces. A heart filled with the love of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى nourishes the face with brightness. They asked Al-Hasan Al-Basri about those who do Qiyām Al-Layl. They said, *"What's the reason that those who perform Qiyām Al-Layl at night have beautiful, radiant faces?"* Al-Hasan Al-Basri said, *"They secluded themselves with Allāh* سبحانه وتعالى *so Allāh* سبحانه وتعالى *adorned them with a light from His."* The Noor of the love of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى that's in the heart manifests in the faces. When the heart finds the love of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, it's illuminated, and it affects the face. The faces become radiant with what has entered the hearts. When you're around such faces, you're constantly reminded of the love of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. Yes, Allāh blesses those whom He loves and those who love Him with radiant faces, but it's not just about appearance; it's mainly about their

discussions and their reminders that remind you about Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. Soem used to say when they visited Al-Hasan Al-Basri, *"We would leave from our gathering with him as though we regarded this whole Dunyā as something insignificant"* because their entire discussion centered around Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. Some of the Salaf used to visit pious servants and Ulamā' to observe their demeanor and their conduct and not just to acquire knowledge from them. Why? Because the essence of knowledge is reflected in one's demeanor, conduct, behavior, and in his character. In Manāqib Al-Imām Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, Ibn Al-Jawzi related that in Imām Ahmad Ibn Hanbal's Halaqāt, there were approximately five thousand students or more. Less than five hundred were writing, the rest were observing, the rest were learning by observing his manners and his proper behavior. The lives of some of the Ulamā' who lived over a millennium ago still resonate with us today. Their teachings and lifestyles that they exemplify still enhance our love for Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. One can only imagine the profound impact on those who had the privilege of sitting in their company.

'Ubaydillāh Ibn 'Abdillāh Ibn 'Utbah Ibn Mas'ūd Al-Hudali was a Tābi'ī who was a teacher of 'Umar Ibn 'Abd Al-'Azīz. 'Umar Ibn 'Abd Al-'Azīz said, *"For me to be in the company of 'Ubaydillāh is more precious to me than the entire world and what's in it."* In another statement, he said, *"By Allāh, I would spend a thousand Dīnār from Bayt Al-Māl to spend a night or some time with 'Ubaydillāh."* What could have prompted the great Khalīfah, 'Umar Ibn 'Abd Al-'Azīz, who was renowned for his Zuhd and his diligence in avoiding any personal gain from Bayt Al-Māl to make such a statement? When he assumed leadership, when he became the leader, he informed his wife about his new role. He said, *"I've become the leader of the Muslims. If you desire Allāh and the Afterlife, contribute all your gold and jewelry to the treasury of the Muslims, or go back to your family's house."* Fātimah, his wife, willingly donated all her possessions to Bayt Al-Māl. He wanted to set an example by starting with himself. One time, he visited Bayt Al-Māl, the treasury of the Muslims, and he smelt a pleasant fragrance. He closed his nose! He said, *"The benefit of fragrance is enjoying the smell of it, and it doesn't belong to me, so I can't benefit from it."* He feared that Allāh سبحانه وتعالى on Yawm Al-Qiyāmah would question him about why he inhaled the fragrance of

what belongs to the Muslims in Bayt Māl Al-Muslimīn. His stories on Zuhd are remarkable, but now he's willing to pay a thousand Dīnār from Bayt Al-Māl to sit with a Tābi'ī scholar named 'Ubaydillāh. Why? Because he'll remind him about Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and the importance of loving Allāh سبحانه وتعالى and that'll bring numerous benefits to 'Umar Ibn 'Abd Al-'Azīz personally as well as to the Ummah in various ways.

The summary and essence if this talk and this concept that guides towards the love of Allāh سبحانه وتعالى is the importance of associating with individuals who appear to possess genuine love for Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. By spending time in their company, one can strengthen his love for Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. By surrounding oneself with those who appear to truly love Allāh سبحانه وتعالى, one can glean the most valuable knowledge, wisdom, and actions that contribute to cultivating a deeper love for Allāh سبحانه وتعالى. The second half of Ibn Al-Qayyim's statement on this same aspect is what we'll cover next Inshā'Allāh, and that is: when you're in gatherings, you're going to speak, therefore, he emphasized the importance of speaking only when your contributions will be beneficial to both yourself and others.

وصلى الله على سيدنا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه وسلم